

Personnel Complaints

1010.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the reporting, investigation and disposition of complaints regarding the conduct of members of the City of Dodgeville Police Department. This policy shall not apply to any questioning, counseling, instruction, informal verbal admonishment or other routine or unplanned contact of a member in the normal course of duty, by a supervisor or any other member, nor shall this policy apply to a criminal investigation.

1010.2 POLICY

The City of Dodgeville Police Department takes seriously all complaints regarding the service provided by the Department and the conduct of its members.

The Department will accept and address all complaints of misconduct in accordance with this policy and applicable federal, state and local law, municipal and county rules and the requirements of any collective bargaining or employment agreements.

It is also the policy of this department to ensure that the community can report misconduct without concern for reprisal or retaliation.

1010.3 PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

Personnel complaints include any allegation of misconduct or improper job performance that, if true, would constitute a violation of department policy or of federal, state or local law, policy or rule. Personnel complaints may be generated internally or by the public.

Inquiries about conduct or performance that, if true, would not violate department policy or federal, state or local law, policy or rule may be handled informally by a supervisor and shall not be considered a personnel complaint. Such inquiries generally include clarification regarding policy, procedures or the response to specific incidents by the Department.

Citizen complaints can be made to the Police and Fire Commission or Chief of Police in regard to sworn members of the department. Citizen complaints can be made to the city's Personnel and Administration Committee or Chief of Police in regard to civilian members of the department.

1010.3.1 COMPLAINT CLASSIFICATIONS

Personnel complaints should be classified in one of the following categories:

Informal - A matter in which the Sergeant or Senior Officer is satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by a supervisor of rank greater than the accused member.

Formal - A matter in which a supervisor determines that further action is warranted. Such complaints may be investigated by a supervisor of rank greater than the accused member or referred to the Lieutenant, depending on the seriousness and complexity of the investigation.

Incomplete - A matter in which the complaining party either refuses to cooperate or becomes unavailable after diligent follow-up investigation. At the discretion of the assigned supervisor or

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the Lieutenant, such matters may be further investigated depending on the seriousness of the complaint and the availability of sufficient information.

1010.3.2 SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS

The following applies to the source of complaints:

- (a) Individuals from the public may make complaints in any form, including in writing, by email, in person or by telephone.
- (b) Any department member becoming aware of alleged misconduct should immediately notify a supervisor.
- (c) Supervisors should initiate a complaint based upon observed misconduct or receipt from any source alleging misconduct that, if true, could result in disciplinary action.
- (d) Anonymous and third-party complaints should be accepted and investigated to the extent that sufficient information is provided.
- (e) Tort claims and lawsuits may generate a personnel complaint.

1010.4 AVAILABILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF COMPLAINTS

1010.4.1 COMPLAINT FORMS

Personnel complaint forms should be available at the police facility and be accessible through the department website. Forms may also be available at other City facilities.

Personnel complaint forms in languages other than English may also be provided, as determined necessary or practicable.

1010.4.2 ACCEPTANCE

All complaints should be courteously accepted by any department member and promptly given to the appropriate supervisor. Although written complaints are preferred, a complaint may also be filed orally, either in person or by telephone. Such complaints should be directed to a supervisor. If a supervisor is not immediately available to take an oral complaint, the receiving member should obtain contact information sufficient for the supervisor to contact the complainant. The supervisor, upon contact with the complainant, should complete and submit a complaint form as appropriate.

Although not required, complainants should be encouraged to file complaints in person so that proper identification, signatures, photographs or physical evidence may be obtained as necessary.

This department will investigate all false claims made against its law enforcement officers. Knowingly making a false complaint against an officer may subject the complainant to a Class A forfeiture (Wis. Stat. § 946.66; Wis. Stat. § 66.0511).

1010.5 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Allegations of misconduct should be administratively investigated as follows.

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1010.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

In general, the investigation of a personnel complaint should rest with the member's immediate supervisor, unless the supervisor is the complainant, or has any personal involvement regarding the alleged misconduct. The Chief of Police or the authorized designee may direct that another supervisor investigate any complaint.

A supervisor who becomes aware of alleged misconduct should take reasonable steps to prevent aggravation of the situation.

The responsibilities of supervisors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring that upon receiving or initiating any formal complaint, a complaint form is completed.
 - 1. The original complaint form should be directed to the Chief of Police, via the chain of command, who will take appropriate action and/or determine who will have responsibility for the investigation.
 - 2. In circumstances where the integrity of the investigation could be jeopardized by reducing the complaint to writing or where the confidentiality of a complainant is at issue, a supervisor should orally report the matter to the Chief of Police, who will initiate appropriate action.
- (b) Responding to all complaints in a courteous and professional manner.
- (c) Resolving those personnel complaints that can be resolved immediately.
 - 1. Follow-up contact with the complainant should be made within 24 hours of the Department receiving the complaint.
 - 2. If the matter is resolved and no further action is required, the supervisor should note the resolution on a complaint form and forward the form to the Chief of Police.
- (d) Ensuring that upon receipt of a complaint involving allegations of a potentially serious nature, Chief of Police is notified via the chain of command as soon as practicable.
- (e) Promptly contacting the Personnel Department and the Chief of Police for direction regarding their roles in addressing a complaint that relates to sexual, racial, ethnic or other forms of prohibited harassment or discrimination.
- (f) Forwarding unresolved personnel complaints to the Chief of Police, who should determine whether to contact the complainant or assign the complaint for investigation.
- (g) Informing the complainant of the investigator's name and the complaint number within three days after assignment.
- (h) Investigating a complaint as follows:
 - 1. Making reasonable efforts to obtain names, addresses and telephone numbers of witnesses.

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2. When appropriate, ensuring immediate medical attention is provided and photographs of alleged injuries and accessible uninjured areas are taken.
 - (i) Ensuring that the procedural rights of the accused member are followed.
 - (j) Ensuring interviews of the complainant are generally conducted during reasonable hours.

1010.5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Whether conducted by a supervisor or a member of the Lieutenant, the following applies to members covered by the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights.

- (a) Interviews of an accused member should be conducted during reasonable hours and preferably when the member is on-duty. If the member is off-duty, he/she should be compensated.
- (b) Unless waived by the member, interviews of an accused member should be at the City of Dodgeville Police Department or other reasonable and appropriate place.
- (c) No more than two interviewers should ask questions of an accused member.
- (d) Prior to any interview, a member should be informed of the nature of the investigation (Wis. Stat. § 164.02(1)(a)).
- (e) All interviews should be for a reasonable period and the member's personal needs should be accommodated.
- (f) No member should be subjected to offensive or threatening language, nor should any promises, rewards or other inducements be used to obtain answers.
- (g) Any member refusing to answer questions directly related to the investigation may be ordered to answer questions administratively and may be subject to discipline for failing to do so.
 1. A member should be given an order to answer questions in an administrative investigation that might incriminate the member in a criminal matter only after the member has been given a *Garrity* advisement. Administrative investigators should consider the impact that compelling a statement from the member may have on any related criminal investigation and should take reasonable steps to avoid creating any foreseeable conflicts between the two related investigations. This may include conferring with the person in charge of the criminal investigation (e.g., discussion of processes, timing, implications).
 2. No information or evidence administratively coerced from a member may be provided to anyone involved in conducting the criminal investigation or to any prosecutor.
- (h) The interviewer should record all interviews of members and witnesses. The member may also record the interview. If the member has been previously interviewed, a copy of that recorded interview should be provided to the member prior to any subsequent interview.
- (i) All members subjected to interviews that could result in discipline have the right to have an uninvolved representative present during the interview (Wis. Stat. § 164.02(1))

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- (b)). However, in order to maintain the integrity of each individual's statement, involved members should not consult or meet with a representative or attorney collectively or in groups prior to being interviewed.
- (j) All members shall provide complete and truthful responses to questions posed during interviews.
 - (k) No member should be compelled to submit to a polygraph examination, nor should any refusal to submit to such examination be mentioned in any investigation (Wis. Stat. § 111.37).
 - (l) A member may not be disciplined, retaliated against or threatened with retaliation for exercising his rights as described in this policy (Wis. Stat. § 164.03).

1010.5.3 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION FORMAT

Formal investigations of personnel complaints should be thorough, complete and essentially follow this format:

Introduction - Include the identity of the members, the identity of the assigned investigators, the initial date and source of the complaint.

Synopsis - Provide a brief summary of the facts giving rise to the investigation.

Summary - List the allegations separately, including applicable policy sections, with a brief summary of the evidence relevant to each allegation. A separate recommended finding should be provided for each allegation.

Evidence - Each allegation should be set forth with the details of the evidence applicable to each allegation provided, including comprehensive summaries of member and witness statements. Other evidence related to each allegation should also be detailed in this section.

Conclusion - A recommendation regarding further action or disposition should be provided.

Exhibits - A separate list of exhibits (e.g., recordings, photos, documents) should be attached to the report.

1010.5.4 DISPOSITIONS

Each personnel complaint should be classified with one of the following dispositions:

Unfounded - When the investigation discloses that the alleged acts did not occur or did not involve department members. Complaints that are determined to be frivolous will fall within the classification of unfounded.

Exonerated - When the investigation discloses that the alleged act occurred but that the act was justified, lawful and/or proper.

Not sustained - When the investigation discloses that there is insufficient evidence to sustain the complaint or fully exonerate the member.

Sustained - When the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to establish that the act occurred and that it constituted misconduct.

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If an investigation discloses misconduct or improper job performance that was not alleged in the original complaint, the investigator should take appropriate action with regard to any additional allegations.

1010.5.5 COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATIONS

Every investigator or supervisor assigned to investigate a personnel complaint or other alleged misconduct should proceed with due diligence in an effort to complete the investigation within one year from the date of discovery by an individual authorized to initiate an investigation.

1010.5.6 NOTICE TO COMPLAINANT OF INVESTIGATION STATUS

The member conducting the investigation should provide the complainant with periodic updates on the status of the investigation, as appropriate.

1010.6 ADMINISTRATIVE SEARCHES

Assigned lockers, storage spaces and other areas, including desks, offices and vehicles, may be searched as part of an administrative investigation upon a reasonable suspicion of misconduct.

Such areas may also be searched any time by a supervisor for non-investigative purposes, such as obtaining a needed report, radio or other document or equipment.

1010.7 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

When a complaint of misconduct is of a serious nature, or when circumstances indicate that allowing the accused to continue to work would adversely affect the mission of the Department, the Chief of Police or the authorized designee may temporarily assign an accused employee to administrative leave. Any employee placed on administrative leave:

- (a) May be required to relinquish any department badge, identification, assigned weapons and any other department equipment.
- (b) Should be required to continue to comply with all policies and lawful orders of a supervisor.
- (c) May be temporarily reassigned to a different shift, generally a normal business-hours shift, during the investigation. The employee may be required to remain available for contact at all times during such shift, and should report as ordered.

1010.8 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Where a member is accused of potential criminal conduct, a separate supervisor or investigator should be assigned to investigate the criminal allegations apart from any administrative investigation. Any separate administrative investigation may parallel a criminal investigation.

The Chief of Police should be notified as soon as practicable when a member is accused of criminal conduct. The Chief of Police may request a criminal investigation by an outside law enforcement agency.

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A member accused of criminal conduct should be provided with all rights afforded to a civilian. The member should not be administratively ordered to provide any information in the criminal investigation.

The City of Dodgeville Police Department may release information concerning the arrest or detention of any member, including an officer, that has not led to a conviction. No disciplinary action should be taken until an independent administrative investigation is conducted.

1010.9 POST-ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Upon completion of a formal investigation, an investigation report should be forwarded to the Chief of Police through the chain of command. Each level of command should review and include their comments in writing before forwarding the report. The Chief of Police may accept or modify any classification or recommendation for disciplinary action. Forms of discipline include, but are not limited to, training, counseling and punitive action.

1010.9.1 CHIEF OF POLICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receipt of any written recommendation for disciplinary action, the Chief of Police should review the recommendation and all accompanying materials. The Chief of Police may modify any recommendation and/or may return the file to the Lieutenant for further investigation or action.

Once the Chief of Police is satisfied that no further investigation or action is required by staff, the Chief of Police should determine the amount of discipline, if any, that should be imposed. In the event disciplinary action is proposed, the Chief of Police shall provide the member with a written notice and the following:

- (a) Access to all of the materials considered by the Chief of Police in recommending the proposed discipline.
- (b) An opportunity to respond orally or in writing to the Chief of Police within five days of receiving the notice.
 - (a) Upon a showing of good cause by the member, the Chief of Police may grant a reasonable extension of time for the member to respond.
 - (b) If the member elects to respond orally, the presentation should be recorded by the Department. Upon request, the member should be provided with a copy of the recording.

Once the member has completed his/her response, or if the member has elected to waive any such response, the Chief of Police should consider all information received in regard to the recommended discipline. The Chief of Police should render a timely written decision to the member and specify the grounds and reasons for discipline and the effective date of the discipline. Once the Chief of Police has issued a written decision, the discipline shall become effective.

The Chief of Police should file a report with the board of commissioners immediately upon issuing a suspension of a member (Wis. Stat. § 62.13(5); Wis. Stat. § 62.50(13)).

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1010.9.2 NOTICE OF FINAL DISPOSITION TO THE COMPLAINANT

The Chief of Police or the authorized designee should ensure that the complainant is notified of the disposition (i.e., sustained, not sustained, exonerated, unfounded) of the complaint.

1010.10 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Discipline carried out by the Department should follow guidelines established by the Police and Fire Commission, as well as the prevailing union contract for sworn employees. The types of discipline can be found in the Standards of Conduct Policy. Discipline imposed for civilian employees should comply with the personnel manual of the city.

1010.11 PRE-DISCIPLINE EMPLOYEE RESPONSE

The pre-discipline process is intended to provide the accused employee with an opportunity to present a written or oral response to the Chief of Police after having had an opportunity to review the supporting materials and prior to imposition of any recommended discipline. The employee should consider the following:

- (a) The response is not intended to be an adversarial or formal hearing.
- (b) Although the employee may be represented by an uninvolved representative or legal counsel, the response is not designed to accommodate the presentation of testimony or witnesses.
- (c) The employee may suggest that further investigation could be conducted or the employee may offer any additional information or mitigating factors for the Chief of Police to consider.
- (d) In the event that the Chief of Police elects to cause further investigation to be conducted, the employee should be provided with the results prior to the imposition of any discipline.
- (e) The employee may thereafter have the opportunity to further respond orally or in writing to the Chief of Police on the limited issues of information raised in any subsequent materials.

1010.12 RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS PRIOR TO DISCIPLINE

In the event that a member tenders a written resignation or notice of retirement prior to the imposition of discipline, it should be noted in the file. The tender of a resignation or retirement by itself should not serve as grounds for the termination of any pending investigation or discipline.

1010.13 POST-DISCIPLINE APPEAL RIGHTS

A non-probationary employee may have the right to appeal the imposition of a disciplinary suspension, transfer, demotion or termination as provided in a collective bargaining agreement, local ordinance or police commission rule (Wis. Stat. § 62.13(5)(i); Wis. Stat. § 62.50(13); Wis. Stat. § 59.26(8)(b)(6)).

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1010.14 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES AND OTHER MEMBERS

At-will and probationary employees and members other than non-probationary employees may be disciplined and/or released from employment without adherence to any of the procedures set out in this policy, and without notice or cause at any time. These individuals are not entitled to any rights under this policy. However, any of these individuals released for misconduct should be afforded an opportunity solely to clear their names through a liberty interest hearing, which should be limited to a single appearance before the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

Any probationary period may be extended at the discretion of the Chief of Police in cases where the individual has been absent for more than a week or when additional time to review the individual is considered to be appropriate.

1010.15 RETENTION OF PERSONNEL INVESTIGATION FILES

All personnel complaints should be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as described in the Personnel Files Policy.